

attributed to engine failure due to jamming of the Reciprocating Slide Valve (RSV) of the engine fuel system resulting from possible contamination of fuel.

(b) the engine of MiG-21 aircraft, which is made of numerous small and intricate components, sometimes develop problems at varying stages of exploitation under different environmental conditions. Once an accident takes place, the investigators of the accident have to study the remnants of the components of the system to try and establish the cause of the failure. In cases of fighter crashes, the components are destroyed due to the high impact speed and intense fire in the wreckage. Therefore, it is not always possible to pinpoint the cause of the engine failure. However, in a few MiG-21 aircraft accidents, the problem of jamming of RSV has already been identified by investigators. The remedial measures could not be instituted till the investigators identified the cause.

(c) Several steps are taken by the IAF on a continuous basis to augment flight safety. In this direction, the RSV has been modified in consultation with the designers of the equipment. Besides the use of one-micron filters during refueling of aircraft and maintaining high level of fuel discipline at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) division and operating units have been instituted by the Indian Air Force. These measures have resulted in sharp reduction in the accident rate of the MiG-21 aircraft.

Scams in purchase of essential items

†35. SHRI MAHENDRA SAHNI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that scams have been/are taking place in purchase of essential items like petroleum, timber, wine, poultry and pulses in the army;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the persons found guilty and the action being taken against the guilty officers; and

(d) the details of the steps taken by Government to keep a check on such scams?

[†]Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b): Certain cases of irregularities in the procurement/purchase of some items of fuel, dry rations and frozen meat to troops have come to light. These cases have been duly investigated by Courts of Inquiry.

(c) In the case pertaining to purchase of fuel, disciplinary action had already been initiated against the seven indicted service personnel. However, in two other cases Courts of Inquiry have been concluded but some of the indicted officers have approached civil courts challenging the recommendations of the Court of Inquiry. These cases are presently *sub-judice*.

(d) The Ministry has promulgated Defence Procurement Manual, 2006 for streamlining the procurement and purchase processes..

Exodus of pilots from Air Force

36. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of posts in the Air Force, particularly the posts of pilots, are lying vacant,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of pilots are leaving their job on one pretext or the other;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and

(e) what measures are proposed to be taken to retain and attract young men into the force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Against an authorized strength of 3278 pilots in the Indian Air Force (IAF), 3068 pilots are in position. The vacancy of 210 pilots cannot be termed large as it does not affect operational requirements.

(c) and (d) There is no large departure of pilots from the Air Force. The details of the numbers of IAF pilots who have sought premature retirement during the last four years is as follows.